



ISRAEL 1954

There are no easy classifications for Israel's social work. It is the product of a rare variety of sponsoring bodies, local conditions, past experiences, religious traditions, schools of thought and areas of training. Today it is possible to discern salient trends in the development of social work practice, but it is still clear that different types of social work co-exist in Israel. One of the most important factors making for a single unified trend was the establishment of the Ministry of Social Welfare, two-and-a-half months after the founding of the State.

The socio-economic facts which left the deepest imprint upon Israel's social services in general, and upon social work in particular, were:

- (a) the heavy, unrestricted immigration;
- (b) the low standards of health and education found among most of the new immigrants and the necessity for many of them to adjust themselves to an entirely new sort of life in a modern society;
- (c) the increase in the ethnic and cultural heterogeneity of the population, resulting in a multitude of quite new social situations;
- (d) the country's difficult economic problems which did not permit desired expansion of essential social services;
- (e) the housing shortage which limited both family and institutional accommodation.

The Ministry of Social Welfare

The Ministry of Social Welfare is the Government's chief agency for the rendering of social work services. Its primary areas of activity are: the general welfare services provided through 350 local welfare bureaus and subsidiary offices to needy new immigrants and old settlers alike; the children and youth services which provide preventive treatment, special education and institutional care; rehabilitation services; care of war sufferers; probation services, and the welfare of prisoners.

The Ministry contributes to the budgets of local welfare offices in accordance with the ability of local authorities to shoulder this responsibility. The Welfare Ministry's contribution to local welfare budgets ranges within 15-40% of the total in the case of the larger municipalities, 50% in the older rural towns and villages, 70-80% in the newer settlements populated largely by new immigrants, and 90-100% in several, as yet unincorporated, new immigrant centers. The welfare departments of the three large cities, Tel-Aviv, Haifa, and Jerusalem continue to exercise practically autonomous control of social welfare services.

This social work covers guidance, financial assistance, medical aid, placement of children in kindergartens, foster homes and other institutions, institutional and non-institutional rehabilitation of handicapped and aged, tax reduction and exemption, etc. Family case work is the ideal, but it is difficult to achieve due to heavy case loads and the lack of skilled personnel. The quality of the services differs according to social situation, the community in question, personnel and budget. Financial assistance is not uniform, and is generally minimal.

In 1952, some 400 social workers employed by the Government and by the local authorities gave various types of service to about 80,000 families (300,000 individuals) through local welfare offices. These offices were organized and supervised by the head office and the regional offices of the Ministry of Social Welfare, and the welfare offices of large municipalities.

Despite the diversity of social situations and of approaches to social welfare, official social work in Israel aims at family welfare, i.e. it views the family as an integral unit which is to be preserved as such wherever possible. It is believed that the social worker specialist such as the child care and rehabilitation worker should enter the picture only after consultation with the family social worker. Only about 15% of the total personnel work in these spe-

cialized services, which include the School Preventive Service, whose main task is the treatment of potential problem children.

Israel's social workers are often called upon to function as community organizers. They must be able to take the initiative in stimulating formation of kindergartens, youth clubs and centers, or study groups, in accordance with the needs of the local situation. They must devote their efforts and resources to help enforce school attendance and raised the educational level of the community. In Maabarot (Transitory Settlements) the social workers are supported by a Madriha (instructress), who introduces the immigrant to the Israel way of life. This project, which employs over 100 women, usually part-time workers, is sponsored jointly by the Welfare Ministry and Women's Organizations.

Specialized social work under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Social Welfare is done by the Youth and Adult Probation Services, which employ 33 youth and 7 adult probation officers, respectively. Because of the shortage of trained personnel the Youth Probation Service reaches only 60% of the wayward young.

The probation officer also uses the case work approach, which includes a study of the subject's past, psychological testing, home visits, and regular talks with the delinquent. His work, moreover, comprises the procurement of services which may help the subject to become more easily adjusted to society.

Other Ministries Rendering Social Work Services

Medical and psychiatric social work is done in conjunction with the health and rehabilitation services of the Ministry of Health. The Ministry of Defense is also involved in social work, specifically the rehabilitation of disabled soldiers. Social work services such as youth recreation and rehabilitation are provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture, and by the larger municipalities. The importance of the group work approach is generally recognized in dealing both with normal and with maladjusted children. Youth workers are drawn largely from the ranks of the youth movements. Psychological testing is used, but the psychoanalytic approach dominates diagnostic and therapeutic activities.

Semi-Official Social Services

Side by side with official social services Israel has a virtual network of semi-official or public services which work closely with the former and serve large sections of the population. It is estimated



Learning Hebrew in the Village of the Aged

that about 200 social workers are employed by the following semi-official and voluntary services:

The Jewish Agency

The Jewish Agency is concerned chiefly with the organization, reception, and absorption of immigration and with the settlement of new immigrants in agricultural cooperatives. Special departments within the Agency (particularly the Department for Youth Aliya) (Youth Immigration), are concerned with the immigration, resettlement, rehabilitation and education of children and youth. Social work is conducted in connection with these. Characteristic are the occupational, administrative, educational and housekeeping services provided for numbers of new immigrant smallholders' settlements.

The General Federation of Labor (Histadrut)

The activities of the General Federation of Labor transcend in their scope those of any other labor union in the world. Besides

the basic institutions designed to assure the workers adequate working conditions, the Federation includes in its membership nearly all the collective and cooperative settlements. It operates the Workers' Sick Fund (about 900,000 members or about 60% of the total population) and a number of smaller mutual aid funds providing old age, disability, widow and orphan insurance.

The social work activities of the General Federation of Labor function within a framework of mutual aid and "indirect assistance."

Malben

Malben, the Institution for the Care of Handicapped Immigrants, maintained by the American Joint Distribution Committee, renders social work services mainly in the fields of rehabilitation, and care for the aged and the disabled. Most of the work centers around the institutions and villages maintained by Malben for the care of the different groups of handicapped immigrants.

Hadassah Medical Organization

The social work of the Hadassah Medical Organization, the pioneer of medical services in Israel (sponsored by Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America) centers around medicine, mother and child care, and health education. A recently established health center in the vicinity of Jerusalem, sponsored by the Hadassah Medical Organization, tries to make health services and health education a rallying point of overall community organization.

Voluntary Organizations

The voluntary organizations were responsible for laying the basis for social services in Israel. During the early Mandatory period these were the first organized bodies to care for the social needs of immigrants, to provide aid for Jewish unemployed, to look after orphaned and homeless children, to help needy mothers and their children, to provide training and recreation for youth, and fulfill a host of other essential tasks. The founding of the Welfare Department (1932) of the Vaad Leumi (National Council of the Jewish Community in Palestine), and the development of the Jewish Agency for Palestine lightened this burden somewhat. Both voluntary and semi-official services contributed to the establishment of the Government services when the State came into being.

At present all three types of services co-exist with a certain measure of coordination.

The main types of voluntary organizations are women's organizations active in the field of child and youth welfare, care of mothers, aid to immigrants and the struggle for women's rights; immigrant organizations, which work for the welfare and cultural absorption of their respective groups; youth movements, which promote political and general education of members, preparing them for the pioneering life; and various religious and philanthropic organizations, which render many services to members and special interest groups.

Social Workers

Social work in Israel is undertaken by personnel of often entirely different background and training. Some are East European immigrants of the post-World War I migration (often active in the guidance of new immigrants in cooperative settlements). Some are former social workers from Germany, who came to Israel during the thirties and were active in public and private organizations prior to the State; others are graduates of professional schools mostly in "Anglo-Saxon" countries; and some are young men and women,

Workroom in the Village of the Aged



many native-born, who received their training at the local School for Social Services.

Israel's two institutions for the training of social workers are operated by the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Tel-Aviv Municipality respectively. The Government school, supervised by the Hebrew University, is a two-year course which includes theoretical and practical training. Only high school graduates are admitted. When full-time courses were insufficient, short intensive seven-month courses were run by the Ministry. Social work candidates thus trained this way must participate in a two-year course of intensive in-service training before they receive professional certificates.

In the absence of a school for probation officers, the probation service recruits social workers, psychologists, and experienced youth leaders, but in-service training is given to prepare the worker more fully for his task.

Legislation

Governmental and municipal social services are not backed by comprehensive social legislation as yet. Existing legal provisions refer mainly to the protection of workers (hours of work, overtime, paid vacations, accident and dismissal compensation, regulations governing employment of minors, paid maternity leave, etc.), the treatment of juvenile offenders, compensation for veterans and entertainment taxes benefitting social services.

The National Insurance Law, passed by the Knesset on November 18, 1953, is the first phase of a comprehensive social insurance program for the entire population, and provides old age and survivors' insurance, maternity insurance which includes infant benefits for all newborn babies, and industrial accident insurance. Under the Law, salaried persons are entitled to old age pensions upon reaching the age of 65 for men and 60 for women, non-salaried persons upon reaching the ages of 70 and 65, respectively. Each salaried person has 3.3% of his earnings deducted for the Social Insurance Fund, each non-salaried person 2.9% of his income. The first pensions will be paid in three years' time. Subsequently, all persons contributing to the Fund for at least five years will be eligible for pensions.

Maternity allowances provide that a woman receives three quarters of her salary for three months, and a grant-in-aid for hospital and layette expenses.

Survivors are to receive pensions provided the deceased was covered by the plan for at least a year.

The work accident insurance provides for complete or part coverage of hospital fees from two to twenty-six weeks as well as compensation in the event of invalidity.

State contributions to the Social Insurance Fund will equal 10% of the total revenues of the Fund from old age pensions and 45% of the revenues from maternity insurance.

The Fallen Soldiers' Families (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Law, passed by the Knesset on July 11, 1950, provides pensions for widows, orphans, bereaved parents or grandparents dependent upon the fallen soldier immediately before his death. It makes provision also for special maternity grants, and insures against illness every recipient or beneficiary of a pension under the law.

Other legislation, such as employment of women, including provision for paid maternity leave, and the treatment of juvenile offenders existed during the Mandatory period. With regard to the employment of women, however, a modernized and more progressive bill, replacing the 1945 Ordinance, is before the Knesset, and has passed its first reading.

Special provisions for the social welfare of children and youths are made in the Apprenticeship Law and the Child Employment Law, both passed in July 1953. The first introduces compulsory apprenticeship in various crafts and prohibits the acceptance of payment for engaging apprentices, and the second forbids employment of children under fourteen years of age and makes provisions for the regulation and supervision of the work of young people under eighteen years.

Published by the

ISRAEL OFFICE OF INFORMATION

11 East 70th Street, New York, N. Y.

Washington, D. C.
1621 22nd St.

Chicago
936 N. Michigan Ave.

Los Angeles
208 W. 8th St.

Montreal, Canada
1260 University Street

This material is filed with the Department of Justice where the required registration statement, under 22 U.S.C. 611 et seq., of Israel Office of Information as an agency of the Israel Government is available for inspection. Registration does not imply approval or disapproval of this material by the United States Government.



PRINTED
IN U.S.A.